

AN
ESSAY
ON
MAN.

IN
EPISTLES to a FRIEND.

EPISTLE I.

Corrected by the AUTHOR.



L O N D O N:

Printed for J. Wilford, at the *Three Flower-de-luces*, behind the *Chapter-house*, *St. Pauls*.

[Price One Shilling.]

ESSAYS

ON

M. A. N.

IN

EPITAPHES TO A FRIEND.

EPITAPHES

BY THE AUTHOR.



LONDON

Printed and Sold by J. DODD, at the Theatre Royal, in Pall Mall.



To the READER.



THE Author was induced to publish these Epistles separately for two Reasons, The one, that he might not impose upon the Publick too much at once of what he thought incorrect; The other, that by this Method he might profit of its Judgement on the Parts, in order to make the Whole less unworthy.





T H E
C O N T E N T S.

E P I S T L E I.

Of the NATURE and STATE of MAN, with re-
spect to the UNIVERSE.

OF Man in the Abstract. *We can judge only with regard to our own System, being ignorant of the Relations of Systems and Things, VERSE 17, &c. Man is not therefore to be deem'd Imperfect, but a Being suited to his Place and Rank in the Creation, agreeable to the General Order of Things, and conformable to Ends and Relations to Him unknown. 35, &c. It is partly upon this Ignorance of future Events, and partly upon the Hope of a Future State, that all his Happiness in the Present depends. 73, &c. His Pride, in aiming at more Knowledge and pretending to more Perfection, the Cause of his Error and Misery. 120. The Impiety of putting himself in the place of God, and judging of the Fitness or Unfitness, Perfection or Imperfection, Justice or Injustice, of His Dispensations. 109. The Absurdity of conceiving himself the Final Cause of the Creation, or expecting that Perfection in the Moral World which is not in the Natural. 127, to 164. The Unreasonableness of his Complaints against Providence, while on the one hand he demands the Perfections of the Angels, on the other the bodily Qualifications of the Brutes. 165. That the Gift of Reason alone countervails all the latter, and that to possess any of the Sensitive Faculties in a higher degree, would render him miserable. 181, 221. That throughout the whole*
visible

The CONTENTS

visible World, an Universal Order and Gradation in these is observ'd, which causes a Subordination of Creature to Creature, and of all Creatures to Man. The Gradations of Sense, Instinct, Thought, Reflection, Reason. 199, to 224. How much farther this Order and Subordination of living Creatures may extend, above and below us? 225. Were any Part of this broken, not that Part only, but the Whole connected Creation must be destroyed. The Extravagance, Madness, and Pride of such a Desire: 239, &c. Consequently, the absolute Submission due to Providence, both as to our Present and Future State. 269, &c.

EPISTLE II.

Of the NATURE and STATE of MAN, with respect to HIMSELF as an Individual.

The Business of Man not to pry into God, but to study Himself. His Middle Nature; his Powers and Frailties, and the Limits of his Capacity. V. 3, to 43. His two Principles, SELF-LOVE and REASON, 43. both necessary, 49. Self-love the stronger, and why? 57. their End the same. 71. The PASSIONS, and their Use. 84, to 110. The PREDOMINANT PASSION, and its Force. 121, to 150. its Necessity, in directing Men to different Purposes, 151. its Providential Use, in fixing our PRINCIPLE, and ascertaining our VIRTUE. 163. Virtue and Vice joyn'd in our Mixt Nature; the Limits near, yet the Things separate, and evident. What is the Office of Reason? 181, &c. How odious Vice in itself, and how we deceive ourselves into it. 200. That however, the Ends of Providence and General Good are answer'd in our Passions, and Imperfections: 222, &c. How usefully these are distributed to all Orders of Men, 227. how useful they are to Society, 235. and to the Individuals, 247. In every State, and in every Age of Life. 257, to the end.

E P I S -

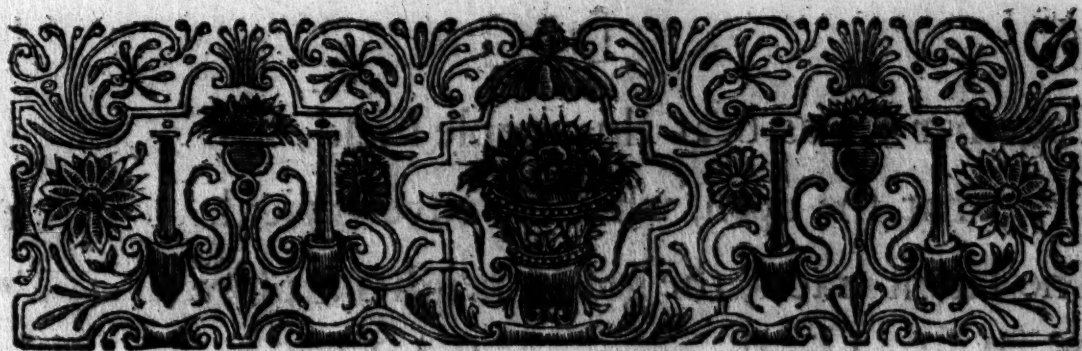
The CONTENTS.

EPISTLE III.

Of the NATURE and STATE of MAN with respect to SOCIETY.

The Whole Universe one System of Society, VER. 7, &c. Nothing is made wholly for itself, nor yet wholly for Another. 27. The Happiness of Animals mutual. 53. Reason or Instinct operate alike to the Good of each Individual. 83. Reason or Instinct operate to Society, in all Animals. 109. How far Society carry'd by Instinct. 119. How much farther by Reason. 131. Of that which is call'd the STATE of NATURE. 149. Reason instructed by Instinct in the Invention of Arts. 169. and in the Forms of Society. 179. Origin of Political Societies, 199. Origin of Monarchy, 211. Patriarchal Government, 215. Origin of True Religion and Government; from the same Principle, of Love. 226, &c. Origin of Superstition and Tyranny; from the same Principle, of Fear. 241, &c. The Influence of Self-Love operating to the Social and Publick Good. 269. Restoration of true Religion and Government on their first Principle. 285. Mixt Government. 289. Various Forms of each, and the True End of All. 303, &c.





A N

ESSAY on MAN.

EPISTLE I.



WAKE! my LÆLIUS, leave all meaner
Things
To low Ambition and the Pride of
Kings.

Let Us (since Life can little more supply
Than just to look about us, and to die)
Expatriate free, o'er all this *Scene of Man*,
A mighty Maze! but not without a Plan;
A Wild, where weeds and flowers promiscuous shoot,
Or Garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.

Together let us beat this ample Field;
 Try what the open, what the coverts yield, 10
 The latent tracts, the giddy heights explore
 Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar;
 Eye Nature's walks, shoot Folly as it flies,
 And catch the Manners living as they rise;
 Laugh where we *must*, be candid where we *can*, 15
 But vindicate the Ways of *God* to Man.

Say first, of *God* above, or *Man* below,
 What can we *reason*, but from what we *know*?
 Of Man, what see we but his Station here,
 From which to reason, or to which refer? 20
 Thro' Worlds unnumber'd tho' the *God* be known,
 'Tis ours to trace him, only in our own.
 He who thro' vast Immensity can pierce,
 See Worlds on Worlds compose one Universe,
 Observe how System into System runs, 25
 What other Planets, and what other Suns?
 What vary'd Being peoples ev'ry Star?
 May tell, why Heav'n made all things as they are.

But

But of this Frame the Bearings, and the Ties,
 The strong Connections, nice Dependencies, 30
 Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
 Look'd thro'? or can a Part contain the Whole?

Is the great Chain that draws all to agree,
 And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee?

Presumptuous Man! the Reason wouldst thou find 35
 Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind?
 First, if thou can'st, the harder reason guess
 Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less?
 Ask of thy Mother Earth, why Oaks are made
 Taller or stronger than the Weeds they shade? 40
 Or ask of yonder argent Fields above,
 Why Jove's Satellites are less than Jove?

Of Systems possible, if 'tis confess'd
 That Wisdom infinite must form the *Best*,
 Where all must *full* or not *coherent* be, 45
 And all that rises, rise in due *degree*;
 Then, in the Scale of Life and Sence, 'tis plain
 There must be, *some where*, such a Rank as *Man*;

And all the question (wrangle 'ere so long)
Is only this, if God has plac'd him wrong? 50

Respecting *Man* whatever wrong we call,
May, must be right, as relative to *All*.

In human works, though labour'd on with pain,
A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain;

In God's, one single can *its End* produce, 55
Yet serves to second too some *other Use*.

So Man, who here seems principal alone,
Perhaps acts second to some Sphere unknown,

Touches some Wheel, or verges to some Gole;
'Tis but a Part we see, and not a Whole. 60

When the proud Steed shall know, why Man restrains
His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;

When the dull Ox, why now he breaks the clod,
Now wears a Garland, an *Aegyptian* God;

Then shall Man's Pride and Dulness comprehend 65
His Action's, Passion's, Being's, Use and End;

Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd; and why
This hour a Slave, the next a Deity?

Then

Then say not Man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault;
 Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought; 70
 His Being measur'd to his State, and Place,
 His time a Moment, and a Point his space.

Heav'n from all Creatures hides the book of Fate,
 All but the page prescrib'd, their *present state*,
 From Brutes what Men, from Men what Spirits know,
 Or who could suffer Being here below? [75
 The Lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to day,
 Had he thy *Reason*, would he skip and play?
 Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
 And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood. 80
 Oh blindness to the future! kindly giv'n
 That each may fill the Circle mark'd by Heav'n,
 Who sees with equal eye, as God of *All*,
 A Hero perish, or a Sparrow fall,
 Atoms, or Systems, into ruin hurl'd; 85
 And now a Bubble burst, and now a World!

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
 Wait the great teacher, Death, and God adore!

What

What future blifs, he gives not thee to know,
 But gives that *Hope* to be thy blessing now. 90
Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
 Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest;
 The Soul uneasy, and confin'd at home,
 Rests, and expatiates, in a life to come.

Lo! the poor *Indian*, whose untutor'd mind 95
 Sees God in Clouds, or hears him in the Wind;
 His soul, proud Science never taught to stray
 Far as the Solar walk, or Milky way,
 Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n
 Behind the cloud-topt Hill an humbler Heav'n, 100
 Some safer World in depth of woods embrac'd,
 Some happier Island in the watry waste;
 Where Slaves once more their native land behold,
 No Fiends torment, no Christians thirst for Gold.
 To *be*, contents his natural desire, 105
 He asks no Angel's wing, or Seraph's fire,
 But thinks, admitted to that equal Sky,
 His faithful Dog shall bear him company.

Go,

Go, wiser Thou! and in thy scale of sense
 Weigh thy *Opinion* against *Providence*: 110
 Call Imperfection what thou fancy'st such,
 Say, here he gives too little, there too much;
 Destroy all Creatures for thy sport or gust,
 Yet cry, if Man's unhappy, God's unjust,
 If Man, alone, engross not Heav'n's high Care, 115
 Alone, made perfect here, immortal there:
 Snatch from his hand the Balance and the Rod,
 Re-judge his Justice, Be the GOD of GOD!

In reas'ning *Pride* (my Friend) our error lies;
 All quit their sphere, and rush into the Skies. 120
Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,
 Men would be Angels, Angels would be Gods.
 Aspiring to be Gods, if Angels fell,
 Aspiring to be Angels, Men rebel:
 And who but wishes to invert the Laws 125
 Of ORDER, sins against th' Eternal Cause.

Ask for what end the heav'nly Bodies shine?
 Earth for whose use? *Pride* answers, " 'Tis for mine:

" For me kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r,
 " Suckles each herb, and swells out ev'ry flow'r; 130
 " Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew
 " The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
 " For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings,
 " For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;
 " Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise; 135
 " My footstool Earth, my canopy the Skies.

But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
 From burning Suns when livid deaths descend,
 When Earthquakes swallow, or when Tempests sweep
 Towns to one grave, and Nations to the Deep? 140
 No ('tis reply'd) the first Almighty Cause
 " Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral Laws;
 " Th' exceptions few; some Change since all began;
 " And what created, perfect? — Why then *Man*?
 If the great *End* be human Happiness, 145
 And Nature deviates, how can Man do less?
 As much that End a constant course requires
 Of show'rs and sunshine, as of Man's Desires,
 2 : enim aia T. gnev. As

As much eternal Springs and cloudless Skies,
 As men for ever temp'rate, calm, and wise. 150
 If Plagues or Earthquakes break not Heav'n's design,
 Why then a *Borgia* or a *Catiline*?
 From Pride, from Pride, our very reas'ning Springs;
 Account for moral, as for nat'ral things:
 Why charge we Heav'n in those, in these acquit? 155
 In both, to reason right, is to submit.

Better for Us, perhaps, it might appear,
 Were there all Harmony, all Virtue here,
 That never Air or Ocean felt the Wind,
 That never Passion discompos'd the mind: 160
 But ALL subsists by Elemental strife;
 And Passions are the Elements of Life.
 The gen'ral ORDER, since the whole began,
 Is kept in *Nature*, and is kept in *Man*.

What would this Man? now upward will he soar,
 And little less than Angel, would be more; 165
 Now looking downward, just as griev'd appears
 To want the strength of Bulls, the Fur of Bears.

Made for his Use all Creatures if he call,
Say what their use, had he the pow'rs of all? 170

Nature to these, without profusion kind,
The proper organs, proper pow'rs assign'd;
Each seeming want compensated of course
Here, with degrees of Swiftnefs, there, of Force;
All in exact proportion to the State; 175
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.
Each Beast, each Insect, happy in its own,
Is Heav'n unkind to Man, and Man alone?
Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
Be pleas'd with nothing, if not blest'd with all? 180

The blifs of Man (could Pride that blessing find)
Is, not to think, or act, *beyond* Mankind;
No Pow'rs of Body or of Soul to share,
But what his Nature and his State can bear.
Why has not Man a microscopic sight? 185
For this plain reason, Man is not a Mite:
Say what th' advantage of so fine an Eye?
T' inspect a Mote, not comprehend the Sky:

Or

Or Touch, so tremblingly alive all o'er?
 To smart, and agonize at ev'ry pore: 190
 Or quick Effluvia darting thro' the brain?
 To sink oppress'd with Aromatic pain.
 If Nature thunder'd in his opening ears,
 And stunn'd him with the music of the Spheres,
 How would he wish, that Heav'n had left him still 195
 The whisp'ring Zephyr, and the purling Rill?
 Who finds not Providence all-good and wise,
 Alike in what it gives, and what denies?

Far as Creation's ample Range extends,
 The Scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends: 200
 Mark how it mounts, to Man's imperial race
 From the green Myriads in the peopled Grass!
 What modes of sight, betwixt each wide extreme,
 The Mole's dim curtain, and the Lynx's beam:
 Of smell, the headlong Lions between, 205
 And Hound, sagacious on the tainted green:
 Of hearing, from the Life that fills the flood,
 To that which warbles through the vernal wood:

D

The

The Spider's touch, how exquisitely fine,
 Feels at each thread, and lives along the line: 210
 In the nice Bee, what sense so subtly true
 From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew.
 How *Instinct* varies! in the groveling swine,
 Compar'd half-reas'ning Elephant! with thine;
 'Twixt that, and *Reason*, what a nice Barrier, 215
 For ever sep'rate, yet for ever near:
 Remembrance, and Reflection, how ally'd;
 What thin partitions Sense from Thought divide:
 And middle Natures, how they long to join,
 Yet never pass th' insuperable Line! 220
 Without this just *Gradation*, could they be
 Subjected these to those, or all to thee?
 The Pow'rs of all subdu'd by thee alone,
 Is not thy Reason all those pow'rs in one?

See, thro' this Air, this Ocean, and this Earth, 225
 All Matter quick, and bursting into birth.
 Above, how high progressive life may go?
 Around, how wide? how deep extend, below?

Vast Chain of Being? which from God began,
 Natures ethereal, human, Angel, Man, 230
 Beast, Bird, Fish, Insect! what no Eye can see,
 No Glass can reach! from Infinite to Thee,
 From Thee to Nothing! — On superior Pow'rs
 Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
 Or in the full Creation leave a Void, 235
 Where, one step broken, the great Scale's destroy'd:
 From Nature's Chain whatever Link you strike
 Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.

And if each System in Gradation roll,
 Alike essential to th' amazing Whole; 240
 The least confusion but in one, not all
 That System only, but the whole must fall.
 Let Earth unbalanc'd from her Orbit fly,
 Planets and Suns rush lawless thro' the Sky,
 Let ruling Angels from their Spheres be hurl'd, 245
 Being on Being wreck'd, and World on World,
 Heav'ns whole foundations to their Centre nod,
 And Nature tremble, to the Throne of God.

All

All this dread ORDER break— For whom? For thee?
Vile Worm! —O Madnefs! Pride! Impiety! 250

What if the Foot, ordain'd the duft to tread,
Or Hand to toil, aspir'd to be the Head?
What if the Head, the eye or ear, repin'd
To ferve mere Engines to the ruling Mind?
Juft as absurd, for any Part to claim 255
To be another, in this gen'ral Frame:
Juft as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains,
The great directing MIND of ALL ordains.

All are but parts of one ftupendous Whole,
Whofe Body *Nature* is, and *God* the Soul; 260
That, chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the fame,
Great in the Earth, as in th' Æthereal frame,
Warms in the Sun, refreshes in the Breeze,
Glow's in the Stars, aud bloffoms in the Trees,
Lives thro' all Life, extends thro' all Extent, 265
Spreads undivided, operates unſpent,
Breathes in our foul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect in a hair, as heart,

As full, as perfect in vile Man that mourns,
 As the rapt Seraphim that sings and burns; 270
 To Him no high, no low, no great, no small;
 He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.

Cease then, nor ORDER *Imperfection* name:
 Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
 Know thy own *Point*: This kind, this due degree 275
 Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.
 Submit--- in this, or any other Sphere,
 Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear:
 Safe in the hand of one disposing Pow'r,
 Or in the natal, or the mortal Hour. 280
 All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
 All Chance, Direction which thou canst not see:
 All Discord, Harmony not understood;
 All partial Evil, universal Good:
 And spight of Pride, in erring Reason's spight, 285
 One truth is clear; "Whatever Is, is RIGHT."

F I N I S.

As tall, as perfect in the Man that mounts
 As the rapid Seraphim that sing and burn;
 To Him no high, no low, no great, no small;
 He fills the bounds, connects, and equals all.

Cease then, not O'er a Representation name:
 Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
 Know thy own Power: This kind, this due degree
 Of blindness, weakness, Heaven bestows on thee;
 Submit— in this, or any other Sphere,
 Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear;
 Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,
 Or in the natal, or the mortal Hour.
 All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
 All Chance, Direction which thou canst not see;
 All Discord, Harmony not understood;
 All partial Evil, universal Good:
 And spite of Pride, in erring Reason's sight,
 One truth is clear; "Whatever is, is Right."